NOTE XXVI.

ON THE RHINOCEROSES FROM THE EAST-INDIAN-ARCHIPELAGO

BY

Dr. F. A. JENTINK.

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It seems that the distribution of the *Rhinocerotidae* over the islands of the Malayan Archipelago is still a puzzle to all the authors, unscientific as well as scientific ones, even to the most modern writers on the subject. This fact is the more surprising as fifty years ago the question was *nearly* settled and as since the year 1876 the problem in fact does not exist more at all.

Sal. Müller and Herm. Schlegel said 1839—44 [1]), that in Sumatra was living *Rhinoceros sumatrensis*, and in Java another species *Rhinoceros sondaicus;* the latter *perhaps* also in Borneo. Beautifully executed plates illustrate their accurate and excellent descriptions. The open question thus was this: *does there exist a Rhinoceros in Borneo, and if so, to what species may it belong?*

Jerdon [2]) writing in 1874 mentioned *Rhinoceros sondaicus* from Java and Borneo, *Rh. sumatrensis* from Sumatra. He evidently accepted Müller's *hypothesis* as a *fact.*

Prof. Flower [3]) recognized in 1876 a young skull of a Rhinoceros from Borneo, Labuan, by Mr. Low, as belonging

1) Bijdragen tot de Natuurlijke Historie der Rhinocerossen van den Indischen Archipel; see Verhandelingen over de Natuurlijke Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche overzeesche Bezittingen door C. J. Temminck. Zoologie.

2) The Mammals of India, p. 234.

3) P. Z. S. L. p. 450.

to *Rh. sumatrensis:* of the habitat there was not a shadow of uncertainty as in the case of the other *supposed* Bornean skulls in the same collection, which are *Rh. sondaicus.*

The same author [1]) gave in 1880 an additional incontroversible proof of the existence of *Rh. sumatrensis* in Borneo; a skull and the skin of the face, with both horns, of an aged individual, collected by Mr. Pryer, Elopura, Bay of Sandakan, North-Eastern-Borneo, belonged after Prof. Flower's examination to *Rh. sumatrensis.*

Mr. Sterndale [2]) told in 1884 that, according to a M. S. of Mr. J. Cockburn, *Rh. sondaicus* inhabits Sumatra, Java and Borneo.

In Mr. W. L. Sclater's Catalogue [3]), 1891, I see, that according to him *Rh. sondaicus* lives in Sumatra, Java and Borneo, and *Rh. sumatrensis* too in Sumatra, Java and Borneo.

According to Prof. Flower and Lydekker [4]), 1891, *Rh. sondaicus* lives in Java, Sumatra and probably Borneo, meanwhile *Rh. sumatrensis* is to be found in Sumatra and Borneo.

After Mr. Blanford [5]) the distribution of the Rhinoceros in the Soenda-islands is as follows: *Rh. sondaicus* in Sumatra, Java and Borneo, *Rh. sumatrensis* in Sumatra and Borneo.

In the same year 1891 [6]), Mr. Edward Bartlett published his »Notes on the Bornean Rhinoceros". He reports that there are four heads and three horns of the Rhinoceros of Borneo in the Museum at Kuching, Sarawak; that the general appearance of this animal (judging from the two heads with skin attached) is simular to that of the Sumatran species *(Rhinoceros sumatrensis);* that the Rhino-

1) P. Z. S. L. p. 69.
2) Mammalia of India and Ceylon.
3) Catalogue of Mammalia in the Indian Museum, Pt. II.
4) An introduction to the study of Mammals.
5) P. Z. S. L. p. 654.
6) The fauna of British India, including Ceylon and Burma, 1888—91 Mammalia, 30 Nov. 1891.

ceros is becoming extremely rare in the Province of Sarawak; that in Central and North Borneo in the old jungle it is more plentiful and that he had *heard* that two species exist, but this, he thinks, is doubtful.

Mr. Everett [1]) remarked in 1893: »the Javan Rhinoceros (*Rh. sondaicus*) has been supposed to exist in Borneo, but my inquiries on the subject have failed to elict any reliable evidence that this is the case; but the discovery of some subfossil molars in Sarawak, which have been indentified as belonging to this species on good authority, renders it probable that it may yet be discovered in the comparatively unexplored interior".

If we examine carefully the above cited papers and ask for *facts*, upon which have been based the statements that *Rhinoceros sondaicus* should live in Sumatra and Borneo and that *Rh. sumatrensis* lives in Java, we must confess that there are *no facts at all.*

The material in the Musea teaches that at present we know with absolute certainty that the Rhinoceroses are distributed over the East-Indian-islands as follows: *Rh. sondaicus* over Java and *Rh. sumatrensis* over Sumatra and Borneo.

1) P. Z. S. L. p. 493.